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# ENG 3702-001: American Realism

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**Office Hours: MW: 11-12:00; 1:00-2:00; additional times by appointment**

**English 3702-001 AMERICAN REALISM  
Fall 2006**

**Purpose**

The course offers a literary-historical study of works associated with the development of American Realism, a literary movement that flourished from 1865 to 1900 and that continues to this day. We will examine ways in which writers including Dickinson, Twain, Howells, James, and Chopin sought to represent reality. In addition, we will consider how social and intellectual changes influenced the writers' literary techniques and concepts of reality. You will have the opportunity to read a wide range of outstanding works reflecting economic, racial, gender and other issues that accompanied America's transition from an agrarian to an urban society.

**Scope**

Because the American Realists excelled at writing stories and novels, most of the works fit into those genres. But there is plenty of variety. Realism is by no means a monochromatic movement. There are the Realism of local color, the Realism of social criticism, the Realism of psychological analysis, the Realism of biological and economic determinism, and even the Realism of gothic horror.

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

*Written Responses:* 30%

During the semester, you will write six written responses (300-400 words each) focusing on questions I will pose in class. In each response, you will be expected to state a clear position in a main-idea sentence and support that position with evidence and reasoning. Responses will be evaluated for content (clarity and depth of main-idea sentence, sufficiency and coherence of evidence and reasoning) and, to a lesser extent, for grammar and mechanics. A response can receive a failing grade if the composition includes a great number of drastic sentence errors (fragments, splices, disagreements, dangling modifiers, etc.).

*Critical Essay:* 45%

You will turn in an essay of 8-10 pages (not including endnotes and works cited) in twelve-point type. Essays will be evaluated for content (clarity and depth of thesis, sufficiency and coherence of

evidence and reasoning) and, to a lesser extent, for grammar and mechanics. However, an essay can receive a failing grade if the composition includes a great number of drastic sentence errors (fragments, splices, disagreements, dangling modifiers, etc.).

*Final Examination:*

25%

The final examination will be in two parts. Part I will include four items from which you will choose two items as the basis of 250-300 word responses. Part II will include three items from which you will choose one item as the basis of a 600-800 word response. Part I will count 40% of the exam; Part II will count 60%.

**Note:** When I evaluate written responses, critical essays and final examinations, I use a simple ten-point scale linked to letter grades. That is, an 87% is a B+, an 85% is a B, an 82% is a B-.

**Attendance and Grading**

If you have a verifiable excuse from a doctor, the Health Service, or an appropriate University official, I will drop missed written responses from your average. You cannot make up missed written responses. If you accumulate three unexcused absences, each subsequent unexcused absence will carry a penalty of 5% off your final grade.

**Information for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Electronic Writing Portfolio**

This course is writing intensive. You can submit an approved electronic copy of a written assignment or your critical essay for the portfolio.

**NOTES**

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

1. Week of August 21
  - Introduction to Course
  - Lecture: Literary-Historical Background
  - Discussion of Poems from Melville's *Battle-Pieces* (handout) and Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (64-8), "The Wound-Dresser" (81-83)
2. Week of August 28
  - Poems by Dickinson: "These are the days when Birds come back" (128), "The Robin's my Criterion for Tune" (130), "A Bird came down the Walk" (131), "I like a look of Agony" (129), "There's a certain slant of light" (129), "I died for Beauty—but was scarce (133), I heard a Fly (133)
  - Bret Harte: "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (604-5, 607); George Washington Cable: "Belles Demoiselles Plantation" (618)
  - Twain: "The Notorious Jumping Frog" (181-87), From *Life on the Mississippi* (197-206)
3. Week of September 4
  - Labor Day: No Classes
  - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (206-43)
  - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (243-74)
4. Week of September 11
  - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (274-325)
  - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (325-371)
  - From *Letters from the Earth* (400-402)
5. Week of September 18
  - Harris: "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story" (629-31); Chesnutt: "The Passing of Grandison" (743-54)
  - James: "Daisy Miller" (422-42)
  - James: "Daisy Miller" (442-62)
6. Week of September 25
  - Jewett: "A White Heron" (642-49); Freeman: "The Revolt of Mother" (732-43)
  - Gilman: "The Yellow Wall Paper" (765-76)
  - Howells: "Editha": (403-5, 413-21)
7. Week of October 2
  - Crane: *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (787-89, 793-809)
  - Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (809-832)
  - Chopin, *The Awakening* (649-72)

8. Week of October 9
  - The Awakening* (672-709)
  - The Awakening* (709-32)
  - Fall Break
9. Week of October 16
  - Crane: *The Red Badge of Courage* (115-74) from the Crane Collection
  - The Red Badge of Courage* (174-231)
  - “The Blue Hotel” (251-278)
10. Week of October 23
  - James: “The Turn of the Screw” (478-508);
  - “The Turn of the Screw” (508-542)
  - “The Beast in the Jungle” (543-70); **Written Proposals for Critical Essays Due**
11. Week of October 30: Be scared. Be very scared.
  - “The Jolly Corner” (570-91)
  - Bierce: “The Boarded Window” (614-17); London: “To Build a Fire” (862-72)
  - Garland: “Under the Lion’s Paw” (754--64); Cather: “Neighbor Rosicky” (901-22)
12. Week of November 6
  - Conferences Concerning Critical Essays (Bring written proposals.)
  - Conferences Concerning Critical Essays (Bring written proposals.)
  - Conferences Concerning Critical Essays (Bring written proposals.)
13. Week of November 13
  - Dreiser: *Sister Carrie* (3-93)
  - Sister Carrie* (93-182)
  - Sister Carrie* (183-241);

**THANKSGIVING BREAK: Let them eat turkey.**

14. November 27
  - Sister Carrie* (241-395)
  - Sister Carrie* (395-454)
  - Critical Essays Due**
15. Week of December 4
  - Robinson: Poems (881-894):
  - Frost: Poems (942-950, 968--“Design”)
  - Orientation for Final; Student Evaluation of Instruction